

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

DHA-02 /084 W

-----031848Z 056171 /46

R 031456Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1151

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0015

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SY

SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA REVIEW FOR JANUARY 3, 1977

1. SYRIA MEDIA HEADLINED 1977 AS IMPORTANT YEAR FOR
MOVEMENT ON POLITICAL FRONT AND HAILED SYRIA'S ROLE IN
BRINGING ABOUT ARAB SOLIDARITY AND ENDING LEBANESE CRISIS.
UNNAMED OBSERVERS IN AL-BAATH LEAD ARTICLE CLAIMED THAT
THIS YEAR COULD BE ONE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE IN AREA
IF ISRAEL COULD BE FORCED TO ACCEPT UN RESOLUTIONS.

2. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL FOCUSED ON 1977 AS "YEAR OF NATIONAL
STRUGGLE UNTIL LIBERATION" AND NEED TO EXERT PRESSURE ON
U.S. AND ISRAEL IN ORDER FORCE COMPLIANCE WITH GENERAL
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ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS RE MIDEAST PEACE. EDITORIAL
PLEDGED THAT "SYRIA OF THE OCTOBER WAR, SYRIA OF ARAB
SOLIDARITY, AND SYRIA OF ARAB UNITY" WILL BE INSPIRED
BY ITS PRINCIPLES AND FORMER STANDS IN THE NEW YEAR.

3. TISHRIIN EDITORIALS DEALT WITH PERCEIVED OBSTACLES
TO PEACE AND MEANS OVERCOME THEM. EDITORIALS CITED

ISRAELI SKEPTICISM TOWARDS ARAB PEACE OFFENSIVE AND ISRAELI CLAIMS THAT ARABS WISH IMPOSE PRIOR CONDITIONS ON PEACE TALKS WITH ISRAEL. AUTHOR OF ONE EDITORIAL AFFIRMED EXISTENCE TWO ARAB PRECONDITIONS AND LISTED STANDARD FORMULA OF FULL WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. HE ACCUSED ISRAEL OF TRYING TO IMPOSE FOUR PRECONDITIONS INCLUDING (A) DENIAL OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, (B) REJECTION PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES AT PEACE TALKS, (C) ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY IN NAME OF SECURE BORDERS, AND (D) IMPOSITION ISRAELI WILL ON FUTURE OF PALESTINIANS AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. SECOND TISHRIIN EDITORIAL SKEPTICAL OF VIEW HELD BY SOME OBSERVERS THAT NEW

U.S. ADMINISTRATION WILL GIVE IMPETUS TO PURSUIT OF PEACE IN AREA, AND INSTEAD CALLED FOR EXERTION OF ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON U.S.

4. SEVERAL ARTICLES DEALT WITH CENSORSHIP LEBANESE NEWSPAPERS. WITHOUT MENTIONING SYRIAN ROLE IN CLOSING NUMBER OF LEBANESE NEWSPAPERS, ARTICLES REPORTED DECISION OF LEBANESE CABINET TO GIVE CENSORSHIP ROLE TO DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PUBLIC SECURITY WITH WIDE-RANGING POWERS TO DELETE ARTICLES AND IMPOSE PENALTIES ON PAPERS WHICH VIOLATE GOL POLICY. PROMINENCE ALSO GIVEN CALL BY LEBANESE PRESS UNION FOR LEBANESE PAPERS WHICH PREVIOUSLY CLOSED TO REOPEN.

5. FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT GIVEN CALL BY DIRECTOR KUWAIT PLO OFFICE, ALI YASSIN, FOR PUTTING END TO ECTIVITIES UNCLASSIFIED

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OF "SO-CALLED" REJECTION FRONT. THIS ARTICLE PARTIALLY HEADLINED "NECESSITY OF PUTTING END TO REJECTION FRONT," DESPITE FACT BULK OF ARTICLE DEALT WITH FAROUK QADOURI'S INTERVIEW WITH KUWAITI AL-WATAN RE CONDITIONS FOR ESTABLISHING PALESTINIAN STATE AND NATIONAL AUTHORITY.

6. COMMENT: PROMINENCE SYRIAN MEDIA GIVING TO ANY STATE- MENT CRITICAL OF REJECTION FRONT AND OTHERS IN PLO WHO OPENLY OPPOSE SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON MAY WELL FORESHADOW CONTINUING INCREASE OF SYRIAN MILITARY PRESSURE ON THESE GROUPS IN LEBANON.

MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION MEDIA, PRESS SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC00015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770002-0169
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770186/aaaacwxo.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 88e3e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3674493
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN MEDIA REVIEW FOR JANUARY 3, 1977
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, SY, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/88e3e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009